

**Full Statement of Timothy J. Koerner  
Assistant Director, Office of Protective Operations  
United States Secret Service**

**U.S. House of Representatives  
Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing and Terrorism Risk Assessment  
Field hearing in Aurora, Colorado on August 10, 2007**

Good morning Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Reichert, and members of the subcommittee. Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to discuss the U.S. Secret Service's role in protecting the upcoming national political conventions in Denver and St. Paul, including the critical relationships we share with our federal, state, and local law enforcement and public safety partners in Colorado and Minnesota.

As the Secret Service Assistant Director for Protective Operations, I am responsible for the entirety of our protective mission. This includes oversight of the Presidential and Vice Presidential protective divisions, as well as all of our tactical resources and airspace security program located within our Special Operations Division. I also oversee the Uniformed Division of the Secret Service, mail screening operations, armored vehicle programs and the protection for former Presidents and First Ladies. In addition, under the auspices of the Dignitary Protective Division, I oversee security matters for visiting foreign heads of state, major presidential and vice presidential candidates receiving Secret Service protection, and for National Special Security Events (NSSE), including national political conventions.

Since I began my Secret Service career in 1983, I have been in protection-related assignments during seven presidential campaigns. Notably, during the 2000 Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles, CA, I was the lead operational security coordinator. Most recently, at the direction of the Secretary of Homeland Security, I served as the Principal Federal Official for the Presidential Inauguration in 2005, which was one of the more recent NSSEs.

**History of U.S. Secret Service Involvement  
with Major Events and National Special Security Events**

In May of 1998, President Clinton issued Presidential Decision Directive 62 (PDD-62), which formalized and delineated the roles and responsibilities of federal agencies in the development of security plans for major events. This document was reaffirmed, in March 2006, when President Bush issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive 15 / National Security Presidential Directive 46 (HSPD-15/NSPD-46). Clarifying responsibilities served to define more clearly the role of each agency and eliminated the duplication of efforts and resources.

The Secret Service's role in developing security plans for major events was further solidified when Congress passed into law the Presidential Protection Act of 2000, which authorized the Secret Service to plan, coordinate and implement security operations at designated events of national significance. This authority was a natural evolution for the Secret Service, as we have led security operations at large events involving the President dating back to our first protective

mandate in 1901. The Secret Service has a long history and expertise at planning and implementing security at major events, and a reputation for communicating and coordinating with our local, state and federal law enforcement partners in those jurisdictions where the major events take place.

When an event is designated a National Special Security Event by the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Secret Service assumes its mandated role as the lead agency for the design and implementation of the operational security plan. The Secret Service has developed a core strategy to carry out its security operations that relies heavily on its established partnerships with law enforcement and public safety officials at the local, state and federal levels.

Collectively, the goal of the Secret Service and the cooperating agencies is to develop and implement a seamless security plan that provides a safe and secure environment for Secret Service protectees, other dignitaries, the event participants and the general public. Substantial advance planning and coordination is required to prepare for these events in connection with a multitude of subjects, such as venue and motorcade route security, communications, credentialing and training.

Beginning with the World Energy Council Meeting in Houston, Texas in 1998, there have been a total of 24 NSSEs, with the most recent being the State of the Union Address on January 23, 2007. Other notable NSSEs include the NATO 50th Anniversary Celebration in 1999, the International Naval Review in New York City in 2000, the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, the G-8 Summit in Sea Island, Georgia in 2004, the State Funeral for former President Reagan in 2004, and the State Funeral for former President Ford earlier this year.

### **National Special Security Event Designation Process**

The NSSE designation process typically begins with a written request from the governor of the host state to the Secretary of Homeland Security. For example, the state of Minnesota began the process when Governor Pawlenty sent a letter to Secretary Chertoff on January 31, 2007. The state of Colorado began the process when Governor Ritter sent a letter to Secretary Chertoff on March 13, 2007. The letters were forwarded for review and consideration to the NSSE Working Group, which is composed of senior officials of the Secret Service, FBI, FEMA, and other federal agencies. When determining NSSE designation, some factors that are considered include the size, significance, location and duration of the event. In regards to the upcoming conventions in Denver and St. Paul, the NSSE Working Group reviewed both requests and the overall security environment, and recommended that the conventions receive NSSE designation. The 2008 Republican National Convention and the 2008 Democratic National Convention were designated as NSSEs by Secretary Chertoff on March 5, 2007, and April 23, 2007, respectively.

Upon designation of an event as an NSSE by the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Secret Service becomes the federal agency with lead responsibility for operational security design, planning, and implementation; the FBI becomes the federal agency with lead responsibility for intelligence and counter terrorism; and FEMA provides planning support and operational readiness and is the lead federal agency for coordinating an effective response to possible emergencies. In compliance with the *National Response Plan* and the National Incident

Management System, the NSSE designation provides event planners with the expertise and resources of the Secret Service and other federal agencies, as well as the experience and knowledge gained from lessons learned during prior NSSEs.

Although the Secret Service is the lead federal agency for operational security, no funding source is available from which we can reimburse state and local governments for security related expenses, including overtime and other personnel-related costs.

It should be noted that the NSSE designation does not alleviate the host city's safety and security commitments or other contractual obligations to the entity hosting the convention (e.g., Republican National Convention Committee, Democratic National Convention Committee).

I would also like to emphasize that an NSSE designation does not mean that the Secret Service, or any other federal government agency, will usurp the local jurisdiction's day-to-day responsibilities related to law enforcement and public safety. The scope of the NSSE is limited to the conventions and the security perimeters that will be established in and around the convention sites, and to protectees, delegates, and other attendees.

### **Planning Process and Coordination**

The actual planning and coordination of these events requires a detailed and sustained effort, sometimes requiring months or years.

The Secret Service's role in developing security for NSSEs enables us to work with our colleagues in law enforcement and public safety to formulate and execute a comprehensive and coordinated operational security plan. As part of our overall approach to security, the Secret Service and its partners identify potential threats, determine suitable countermeasures to mitigate vulnerabilities, and provide appropriate protection for the event and all those in attendance. In addition, the Secret Service, in cooperation with other agencies, coordinates the utilization of resources and assets.

Our objectives in NSSE planning include: effectively leveraging the combined expertise, authorities, and information that we and our partners bring to the NSSE; ensuring that sufficient protective assets are utilized; eliminating redundancies where they are not needed; and being responsible stewards of financial resources. Similar to our planning and implementing of security of a presidential visit to Denver, St. Paul, or any other city, the Secret Service depends upon the long standing, cooperative relationships that our local field offices have forged with law enforcement and public safety partners. The local knowledge and specialized expertise, as well as the human and other resources these partners contribute, are essential to the overall security effort.

The operational security planning process begins with the establishment of an executive steering committee, typically comprised of command-level representatives from the Secret Service, FBI, FEMA, and the law enforcement and public safety agencies with local jurisdiction where the NSSE is taking place. For example, in Denver, the Democratic National Convention executive steering committee includes representatives from the Denver Police Department, Denver Fire

Department, FBI, FEMA, Colorado Department of Public Safety, Denver Office of Emergency Preparedness, Colorado State Patrol, Denver Health Medical Center, United States Attorney's Office, Pepsi Center Management, and the Secret Service. Similarly, in St. Paul, the Republican National Convention executive steering committee includes representatives from the St. Paul Police Department, St. Paul Fire Department, FBI, FEMA, Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, Minneapolis Police Department, Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Minnesota State Patrol, Ramsey County Sheriff's Office, United States Attorney's Office, Xcel Center Management, and the Secret Service.

The executive steering committee establishes a subcommittee structure that distributes taskings in connection with the development of various elements of the operational security plan among a variety of subject matter experts from within the greater law enforcement and public safety community. In Denver and St. Paul, many operational subcommittees will be utilized. They will deal with specific subject areas concerning the event such as: communications, public affairs, training, and transportation.

The subcommittees meet routinely during the weeks and months leading up to the event, and report regularly to the executive steering committee to discuss and share their progress in developing their piece of the overall operational security plan. The executive steering committee also serves as the mediator and final arbiter of disputes that cannot be resolved within subcommittees. In this way, the executive steering committee and the operational subcommittees are the framework for the development and implementation of the security plan, and serve as the conduit for information sharing among the various agencies involved in this process.

Once the NSSE security plan has been developed, and prior to the event, a Multi-Agency Communications Center (MACC) is established. The MACC serves as a central 24-hour communications hub throughout the event and is staffed by representatives from all participating law enforcement and public safety agencies, as well as personnel from public utilities, public works departments, district attorney's offices, and other organizations that have unique roles in the overall security plan. The primary purpose of the MACC is to provide the timely dissemination of information to all entities participating in security operations, and to serve as the centralized coordination center for security-related activities. In addition to being an information collection and dissemination center located in close proximity to the event site, the MACC also shares connectivity with command posts and with emergency operations centers of agencies throughout the area and nationwide.

The MACC shares information and situational awareness with the following coordinated components: the Joint Information Center (JIC), Intelligence Operations Center (IOC), Airspace Security Operations Center (ASOC), Principal Federal Official's Cell (PFO) and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Typically, the MACC is also virtually connected to the following national operations centers: the Secret Service Joint Operations Center (JOC), FBI Strategic Information Operations Center (SIOC), DHS National Operations Center (NOC) – which includes the FEMA National Response Coordination Center (NRCC), and the DOD Northern Command (NorthCom), among others.

At the present time, significant progress has already been made toward establishing appropriate security plans for both the Democratic and Republican National Conventions. The Secret Service has designated supervisory special agents to serve as event security coordinators for both the Democratic National Convention in Denver and the Republican National Convention in St. Paul. These senior individuals have met with their FBI and FEMA counterparts, as well as with local law enforcement officials. Director Mark Sullivan and members of his senior staff have also engaged in productive discussions with the Chiefs of Police from Denver and St. Paul regarding security planning for the Democratic National Convention and Republican National Convention. In addition, executive steering committees have been established, operational subcommittees are being formed, and suitable facilities for Multi-Agency Communications Centers are being explored in both cities.

An essential element of the operational security planning process is information sharing regarding “lessons learned” from previous National Special Security Events. Based on our experiences, we are able to provide detailed observations and recommendations regarding areas of success and areas for improvement that are invaluable to future event security planners. We have reviewed these “best practices” from prior Democratic National Conventions and Republican National Conventions with the respective host cities. Additionally, as the operational security plans for the two conventions take form, joint tabletop and field training exercises will be employed. These exercises will serve to test security plans, interagency coordination, and command-and-control protocols, in addition to lending clarity to participant roles during the NSSE.

We also believe that information sharing extends to the general public, particularly regarding security plans that may impact citizens concerned about road closures or civil aviation restrictions. Primarily through the press and media, but also through other public affairs activities, our objective is to provide timely information about how security measures will affect individuals so that no one is unnecessarily inconvenienced.

At every stage of our planning and implementation of the operational security plan, great attention is paid to respecting the public’s lawful expression of their First Amendment rights. In the absence of a specific fact or observable action that would indicate a demonstration may pose a security threat to a Secret Service protected person, place or event or to public safety, it is the policy of the Secret Service to treat demonstrators as members of the general public and not segregate them from the public.

Although the Secret Service is the federal agency with lead responsibility for the NSSE designated national political convention operational security matters, we view our role as that of coordinator and facilitator. We endeavor to create and implement a comprehensive security plan that focuses on prevention, but also ensures seamless and appropriate response and recovery preparedness. I am confident that we have the right people, the right agencies and the right methodology in place to succeed in our effort. We look forward to continuing our collaborative relationship with our federal, state, and local law enforcement and public safety partners in Colorado and Minnesota to ensure our common goal of safe and secure conventions are achieved next summer.

Madam Chairwoman, this concludes my prepared statement. Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before the subcommittee. I will be pleased to answer any questions you or the other members of the subcommittee may have.